



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

April 21, 2018

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Office of Inspector General Hotline Complaint 2018-0225

**FROM:** (b) (6)  
Special Agent, Hotline Manager  
Headquarters, Office of Inspector General

**TO:** Kevin Christensen  
Assistant Inspector General  
Office of Audit and Evaluations

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Inspector General (OIG), Hotline received a forwarded letter dated April 10, 2018, from the Senators Jeffery Merkley and Thomas Carper. The letter to the Inspector General is requesting information concern the EPA Administrator's use of multiple email addresses.

I am forwarding this information for your office to review and to determine the correct response or action for the Office of Inspector General. If you have any further questions, please call me at (b) (6).

Attachment:

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 10, 2018

The Honorable Arthur A. Elkins, Jr.  
Inspector General  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1301 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 3102  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Elkins,

We write to share our deep concern over Administrator Pruitt's reported use of multiple email accounts. We respectfully request that you open an investigation into whether he is complying with the Federal Records Act and EPA's Records Management Policy<sup>1</sup> when using these accounts. Our offices have received information indicating that the Administrator uses three different secret epa.gov email addresses in addition to his official email address: Pruitt.Scott@epa.gov. It is imperative that there be an investigation into whether the agency has properly searched these email addresses for responsive documents in response to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

Since early 2017, the EPA has received thousands of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests from the public asking for email records, including those from Administrator Pruitt. With the use of multiple secret email accounts or addresses, we are concerned that the Office of the Administrator may be withholding information from the public in violation of valid FOIA requests.

In 2013, your office recommended that the agency "develop and implement oversight processes to update agency guidance on the use of private email accounts, train employees and contractors on records management responsibilities, strengthen relationships between federal records preservation and employee out processing, and deliver a system to create federal records from the new system."<sup>2</sup> These steps are critical to maintaining transparency and ensuring that all public servants, including the Administrator, comply with federal regulations and recordkeeping responsibilities.

In December 2017, EPW staff was informed that the agency maintains three email addresses for the Administrator—one for public comment (Pruitt.Scott@epa.gov), one for scheduling, and one for "communicating"—and that all three addresses had been searched for documents responsive

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/irmpoli8/records-management-policy-define-epas-records-management-responsibilities>

<sup>2</sup> USEPA Office of Inspector General. "Congressionally Requested Inquiry Into the EPA's Use of Private and Alias Email Accounts." EPA Report No. 13-P-0433, September 26, 2013.

to FOIA searches. Following that December 2017 disclosure, we have been informed that the Administrator has at least four, not three, epa.gov email addresses. Further, we have learned that not all of these addresses may have been queried for responsive documents as FOIA requests are processed at the agency.

We request that you initiate an investigation into Administrator Pruitt's use of multiple secret email addresses. Please consider the following:

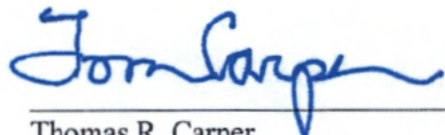
1. How many email addresses has Administrator Pruitt used since taking office, and on what date(s) was each address established?
2. Have any private email accounts been used to conduct government business by the Administrator, or has he directed his staff to use private emails to conduct business?
3. Have each of the email addresses and accounts used by the Administrator been indexed and searched consistent with Freedom of Information Act requirements, starting on the date the email address was created?
4. Have all the email accounts being used by Administrator Pruitt followed all applicable recordkeeping requirements?

Thank you very much for your attention and prompt response to this very important matter. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Adrian Deveny on Senator Merkley's staff at (202) 224-3753 or Michal Freedhoff on the Democratic Staff of the Environment and Public Works Committee at (202) 224-8832.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeffrey A. Merkley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Carper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



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OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

April 21, 2018

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Office of Inspector General Hotline Complaint 2018-0228  
"Information Only"

**FROM:**

(b) (6)

Special Agent, Hotline Manager  
Headquarters, Office of Inspector General

**TO:**

Kevin Christensen  
Assistant Inspector General  
Office of Audit and Evaluation

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Inspector General (OIG), Hotline received a letter dated April 9, 2018, from an unknown person. The letter is reporting fraud, waste, and abuse in the EPA Administrator's office. Specially, the concerns relate the EPA FOIA's process.

This letter is being provided to you and your staff for "Information Only". Please forward as appropriate to Office of Audit and Evaluation staff. Please inform the Hotline within the next 5 calendar days that this has been received. If you have any further questions, please me at (b) (6) (b) (6).

Attachment:



April 9, 2018

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
**Office of Inspector General Hotline- Mail Code 2431T**  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20460

Dear Inspector General:

I am writing to you to report ongoing fraud, waste and abuse in the EPA Administrator's office. As previously reported in Inside EPA on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018, senior EPA officials are engaged in a concerted effort to deprive the public of information which should be made available under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). See article entitled "High-level Awareness Reviews Stall FOIA Releases, Prompting Suits." This "policy" of refusing to release information under FOIA, is fraud, waste and abuse and needs to be investigated and put an end to.

It is fraud because Administrator Pruitt, Chief of Staff, Ryan Jackson, Associate Administrator Liz Bowman, General Counsel Matt Leopold and other political operatives at EPA, have conspired to excuse delays in processing current FOIAs by publicly claiming the Agency is focused on reducing the backlog of FOIAs from the previous Administration. The reality is that Pruitt, Jackson, Bowman, Leopold and others have conspired to delay the release of potentially embarrassing information to the public until the 'Administrator's review' has been completed. The same shenanigans have occurred in dealing with Congressional inquiries from the House Government Oversight Committee.

The Administrator's review delay is waste because attorney manpower in the General Counsel's office is being shifted from EPA programmatic support to deal with a tidal wave of FOIA litigation initiated by public interest group frustration with the inexcusable delays in responding to routine FOIA requests. EPA's FOIA related lawsuits have tripled, if not quadrupled, over the past year due to the delay conspiracy. The lawsuits are not only creating a manpower crisis in EPA's General Counsel's office, but are creating manpower problems for Department of Justice litigation attorneys who have the lead in defending the government against these avoidable lawsuits. It is also "waste" because the Agency is exposed to the payment of plaintiff attorney's fees to public interests groups – fees which are a cinch to claim when a FOIA requests is completely ignored.

The FOIA delay "policy" is abuse, because Jackson, Bowman, Leopold and other political appointees are ordering lower level EPA staff to support their conspiracy to thwart a lawful government process (adhering to EPA regulations and a federal statute mandating time-frames for responding to FOIAs) and, moreover, keep quiet about the conspiracy.

It is suggested your investigation begin with interviewing lower level EPA staff who process FOIAs, such as FOIA coordinators in various AAs, especially OGC, OCFO, OARM, OAR and OECA. Then you can work your way up the chain and root out the principal political appointees who have engineered the conspiracy. EPA National FOIA Office personnel are also well positioned to provide first hand information about the FOIA fraud, waste and abuse.

This complaint is submitted anonymously since there is ample evidence the Pruitt administration quickly retaliates against individuals who provide unwelcome advice, never-mind substantive complaints about squandering taxpayer resources – just ask people like (b) (6) and (b) (6) whose names have appeared in the media lately.

The Inspector General's Office needs to work on this investigation expeditiously to prevent further waste of taxpayer resources solely for the purpose of covering up Pruitt's profligate spending habits.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
**Office of Inspector General Hotline- Mail Code 2431T**  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20460